3:Will and Spinden E-5 (1905) 1906
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sunflowers. Many women and children were already employed in clearing and hoeing their plantations . . . . On each side were pleasant cultivated spots some of which stretched up the rising ground on our left, whilst on our right they ran nearly to the Missouri."

The Mandans used to raise enormous quantities of produce from these crudely tilled plots, and the most of it was stored away in the caches. Each of these caches would hold from twenty to forty bushels of corn and beans, and the number of them was very large. Maximilian says that there was often from five hundred to eight hundred bushels of corn, alone, in the village. In view of his other statements this seems a very moderate estimate. The supply was large enough so that it was not only eaten by the people, but in the winter was sometimes fed to the horses.[1] Lewis and Clarke speak several times of buying corn of the Indians in lots of thirty bushels or more.

The methods of cultivation among the Mandans, though crude, were still above the most primitive types of tilling. The work in the fields was begun in May. Little trenches were made in rows, the grain was put in these and covered. During the summer the soil about the plants was dug up from three to four times. The harvest usually came in October and for that work every member of the village lent a hand, this being one of the few times when the men took any part in the domestic work. Between the rows of corn, rows of sunflowers were usually planted. The only noticeable feature in this description is the fact that the garden plots were cultivated and cared for during the summer, when most of the semi-agricultural tribes lower down the Missouri were absent on long hunting excursions.

The latitude of the Mandan villages required very hardy and quick-ripening vegetables; and we find that the Mandans had perfected a number of plants suited to the cold and dry climate of the region. The crops were often poor because of drought or early frost, but they never failed entirely.[2] The main products were corn, beans, squashes, sunflowers and tobacco. These were all grown when Verendrye visited them, and were

[1] Op. cit., p. 330. [2] Ibid., p. 347.